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Alum Nate Metcalf is champion on "Jeopardy!"

Summary: "Just one game" is what Nate Metcalf, University of Minnesota, Morris alumnus, kept repeating to himself when he was preparing for his appearance on the classic game show, "Jeopardy!"

(February 27, 2007)-"Just one game" is what Nate Metcalf, University of Minnesota, Morris alumnus, kept repeating to himself when he was preparing for his appearance on the classic game show, "Jeopardy!"

"That's all I wanted to win. I didn't want to be greedy, but I just wanted to win. And I did. So I'm insanely happy. And now the words 'Jeopardy! champion' can go in every program bio and every business card I ever have. I did it. This was the dream," said Metcalf.

On January 31, Metcalf's winning "Jeopardy!" appearance aired on national television. Metcalf won a total of \$24,846 from the two shows on which he appeared. Always a fan of the television show, Metcalf auditioned online, received a call for a second audition and finally the call inviting him to be a contestant. This wasn't his first "Jeopardy!" audition. About 10 years ago, as an undergraduate student at UMM, Metcalf auditioned for the College Tournament and passed the test, but never made it onto the show. So this time, said Metcalf, it was "personal." He credits "my lovely bride, Jolene" with helping him to train for the show. "She was a big part of the experience," said Metcalf.

Metcalf stood out throughout his competition in his purple suit and with his lightning quick reflexes on the "thumb-wackety," the button contestants push to ask the right question to a given answer (the phrase was first used in the book *Prisoner of Trebekistan* by Bob Harris). Metcalf also prepared a unique set of "five talking points" that each contestant shares prior to the program and highlights the one they prefer, which Alex Trebek, the show's host, can use during the interview portion of the program:

- He once sang "Do Ron Ron" in Hungarian at an audition-and got the part.
- He was an Alex Trebek wanna-be for 964 episodes of a game show.
- Being on "Jeopardy!" nearly killed him-literally! In an effort to be healthy for the show he got a dose of penicillin, which he was unknowingly allergic to. Big allergic reaction, larger dose could have been fatal.
- He owns 27 pairs of brightly colored tennis shoes, but had to buy dress shoes to be on the show.
- He once won a 50-yard dash in a foam-rubber mascot outfit.

Metcalf highlighted the first point.

"I always thought that everyone could rattle off facts like I can," Metcalf explained. "I grew up in a house where we always played "Jeopardy!" and so I thought that quick fact recall was just a natural thing. But the more I trained, I noticed people looking at me with equal parts awe and confusion."

Metcalf won his first game by a "lock game," meaning that he had more winnings than the second place player's score doubled when it came time for "Final Jeopardy." The second game Metcalf played as a returning champion and was

awarded second place.

"I feel really good. I have nothing to be ashamed about. And I mean that in regard to the little things. I mean, there were no answers that I'm kicking myself for not knowing," said Metcalf.

Metcalf graduated from UMM in 1995 with a degree in theatre arts. He attended graduate school at Kent State University and now works as an artistic associate with The National Theatre for Children in Minneapolis. Metcalf toured with the company for 10 years prior to his current position and has performed in 27 states and three countries.

"Now it's weird watching ["Jeopardy!"]. Because I know everything the players have gone through," said Metcalf. "I see it through the player's eyes much more than I did before. And I pick up on the subtle things that Alex [the game show host] does. Watch how his interest fades on Friday's shows. To him Friday is the show they tape at 5 p.m. He wants to get out of there and go to a Lakers game, so he's not chatty," shared Metcalf.

Metcalf invites "Jeopardy!" enthusiasts to read the entire story of his experience on his blog at [Nate Metcalf](#).

Photo: Jeopardy! host Trebek (left) and Metcalf

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